United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

23rd PLENARY MEETING
Friday, 8 OCtober 1993
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BEN MOUSSA (Comoros) *(interpretation from French)*: In addressing this Assembly for the first time, I am pleased to extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of the delegation of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, which I have the honour to head, on your outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In our view, your moral and intellectual qualities and your extensive experience in international affairs are clear guarantees of the success of our work. I assure you that my delegation is fully prepared to assist you as you undertake your noble mission.

I should like to join those representatives who have congratulated your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, on his effective leadership of the Assembly during its forty-seventh session.

Let me take this opportunity also to express a warm welcome to the new States Members of the Organization.

The multifaceted action of the United Nations over the numerous years of its existence has given us a true appreciation of the institution's major role, as well as of the worth of the men who, during that time, have borne the responsibility for it. This is why my delegation expresses satisfaction at seeing Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the head of the Organization. We pay a resounding tribute to him for his dedication and determination to work for peace and the well-being of mankind.

Forty-eight years after its creation, and despite a particularly difficult international situation, our Organization is still struggling to discharge properly the lofty and onerous mission entrusted to it. Equally, with the passage of time, its activity has escalated and become more diversified. Unfortunately, we are today obliged to note that the United Nations is increasingly confronted by enormous financial difficulties, which hamper its proper functioning. The financial crisis that it is experiencing stems primarily from the crushing imbalance between its various tasks and its scanty financial means.

Thus, in the area of peace-keeping, the United Nations is responsible for numerous rather costly operations, while, in several regions of the world, hotbeds of tension and increasing instability seem to presage other difficult situations that are likely to transcend the boundaries of the Organization's ordinary or traditional role. The task is huge, and we must not remain passive in the face of such suffering. It is therefore up to all Member States to contribute effectively to securing an improvement in the Organization's peace-keeping system.

While, within the framework of the work of this forty-eighth session, we are still reviewing a multitude of problems to which we must find solutions, let us recognize that the session does have the advantage of being held at a time when, for the first time in more than 40 years, we are seeing encouraging and promising results with regard to the developments in respect of the problem of Palestine.

The Government of the Comoros would like, through me, to congratulate the signatories of the Washington

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93-86807 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.23
29 October 1993

ENGLISH

agreement. It provides grounds for hope that this mutual recognition and the autonomy of certain territories represent an unquestionable guarantee of the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, so that this part of the world, which for so long has been disrupted by war, can finally experience peace and stability. We pay a well-deserved tribute to the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization for his perseverance in defending the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, whose just struggle we have always supported.

In the same context, my country has great hopes for the negotiations between the South African authorities and the representatives of the black majority. My country sincerely hopes that these negotiations will culminate in the establishment of a truly united, multiracial and democratic South African society.

It is clear that action by the various United Nations authorities has made a considerable contribution to strengthening the credibility of our Organization and the confidence the international community has in it. On the other hand, the rebirth of democracy in Eastern Europe, the opening up of Africa to a multiparty system and the relaxation of tensions among the super-Powers are also factors which should give us hope for a better world. But how can we not be concerned or doubtful when in some parts of the world there are still hotbeds of tension and fratricidal wars? In fact, the deterioration of the situation in Somalia, with all its consequences, in particular the mass displacement of the population and the murder of those who are defending peace, calls for ever greater vigilance and solidarity on our part. It is time for the international community to take effective action with a view to the holding of a conference of national reconciliation to put an end to this war. It is also crucial that States and international organizations continue to render their valuable assistance to these peoples, who are in dire need.

With regard to Africa, I am concerned about our neighbours in Mozambique, in Angola, in Liberia and in all of these countries where human dignity and conscience are being jeopardized, where, unfortunately, dialogue is yielding to force and violence. The Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros is launching a fraternal appeal to these countries to consider the consequences of these wars for the future of their peoples and of Africa as a whole, and hopes that reason will finally prevail.

Moreover, we are still deeply concerned at the present situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The external aggression perpetrated against this independent and sovereign State requires that our Organization, and in particular the Security Council, the major organ responsible for the maintenance of peace, take the necessary action to save that country. We fully support the resolutions of the Security Council concerning this problem, in particular resolution 859 (1993), in which it called

> "for an immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostilities throughout the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as essential for achieving a just and equitable political solution to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina through peaceful negotiations".

On the other hand, the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros is supporting the efforts of our Organization to find a lasting solution to the Korean problem. My country urges the parties involved to implement measures to facilitate the reunification of this country, whose people have suffered for so long from being divided.

Environmental problems are a concern of the international community, which is aware of the adverse consequences of the destruction of the ozone layer and the deterioration of the ecological milieu. It is in this spirit that our States are adopting strategies and policies aimed at safeguarding the environment. Convinced that one cannot separate the environment from development, our Governments must establish procedures and devise national frameworks which will give priority to sustainable development, in accordance with the recommendations of the Rio Conference. Along these lines, the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, with a view to combating the problems of pollution, deforestation and the destruction of natural species, has given priority in its development plan to the preservation of the environment and its natural resources.

Another area to which we should devote specific interest is that of human rights. By the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948, the international community, through the General Assembly of our Organization, for the first time in the history of mankind, shouldered the permanent responsibility of publicizing and championing human rights. Today more than ever before, we continue to have confidence in our Organization, which has always known how to stress the concept of fundamental human rights and freedoms and has made ensuring them one of its fundamental goals. It is therefore important for the United Nations to give priority to human rights programmes There is also a need, within the framework of national policy, to implement and create institutional conditions that would guarantee respect for human dignity.

The World Conference on Human Rights, held recently in Vienna, Austria, allowed the international community to reaffirm its unswerving dedication to respect for inalienable human rights. However, it is our Organization that must see to the implementation of the Vienna recommendations.

We cannot separate the concept of human rights from the concept of democracy, for we cannot conceive of a democracy that would ignore or fail to guarantee human rights and freedoms. This is why our Organization should show particular interest in the changes taking place throughout the world, changes which are, *inter alia*, reflected in the collapse of dictatorships and the emergence of democratic political regimes. The United Nations must encourage and support actions aimed at advancing the democratic process.

As members are aware, the wind of freedom and democracy that has wafted through the world has spared no continent. Thus, in the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, the time has come for democracy and a multiparty system. We have engaged in a revision of our Constitution in order to adapt it to the realities of today's world, with the active participation of all national political movements. We are moving towards legislative and regional elections to give the country all the institutions required by a State of law.

You will agree with me, Mr. President, that this transitional stage of our young democracy is difficult. We are, however, aware that it must be passed through in order to achieve a harmonization of the democratic process as a whole. The Government of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, concerned for the well-being of its people, is sparing no effort to create conditions which promote respect for human dignity and the maintenance of political and social stability in the country.

Such an undertaking requires the assistance of peace- and progress-loving countries and organizations, to help our country effectively manage these freedoms, and to place our young democracy on a solid foundation.

We cannot close this political chapter without recalling another problem, a non-violent one, certainly but no less important: that of the Comorian island of Mayotte. This question will be the subject of a debate in the Assembly, as it is at each of our regular sessions. That is why I will spare the Assembly a list of the facts behind this thorny issue. But I express again the full readiness of the Government of His Excellency Mr. Said Mohamed Djohar and the Comorian people to give the highest priority to dialogue and concerted action to resolve this regrettable dispute which we have had with France since we attained our sovereignty.

There is no need to emphasize that the new international political landscape at the end of the century makes the interdependence of peoples and the solidarity of nations the irreplaceable and only means by which we can guarantee the economic and social development of our States.

Unfortunately, international economic relations are still marked by the bipolar attitude responsible for the growing gap between rich and poor countries. We must now change this attitude - an outcome of the cold war - as a result of which the rich have been becoming even richer and the poor even poorer, and create harmonious conditions for global economic relations. We believe in the ideals of peace and security, but we are firmly convinced that they cannot be fully achieved if famine, malnutrition, disease and natural disasters continue to be the lot of the majority of the States which make up the international community.

The future of the developing countries continues to be a priority of the various specialized institutions of our Organization, but the failure of various development programmes and strategies initiated in our respective countries is no secret. That fact compels us to give thought together to ways and means to relaunch a different type of development, of which our Organization must be the catalyst.

The advent of a new economic world order is more likely today than yesterday, despite a crisis that is weakening the financial Powers, de facto reducing their capacity to give development assistance. We understand the new obligations of the big Powers, faced with unemployment, reduced productivity and the need to support the new States born of the fragmentation of the eastern bloc. But it is up to them to give a new impetus to vertical cooperation, in order to enable the countries of the South to extricate themselves from chaos.

In that spirit, the developing countries have indeed learned the lesson that they must rely on themselves first and foremost. This is why, from Africa to the Orient, structures are emerging whose objective is to assure regional economic integration. The establishment of the African Economic Community will meet Africa's need for an instrument for functional cooperation which can

harmonize development and cooperation between the States of this continent, the breadbasket of the world.

For the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, cooperation with the developing countries is an essential element in such cooperative relations. My country is one of those which are convinced that South-South cooperation can be an important factor in rebalancing world economic relations.

In its continuous development efforts the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros is focusing on freeing and restructuring development support institutions. In the spirit of this impetus towards socio-economic recovery, we have agreed with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on a structural adjustment programme whose success depends on the full and active support of the international community.

As the century draws to a close, the world is experiencing profound changes in the ideological, political, economic, social, scientific and technical spheres. The problems it is facing require consideration at the global level from now on. International solidarity compels us to act in greater cooperation in managing world affairs.

We have the instrument for this: the United Nations. But we are among those who believe that if it is to be more effective the Organization and its specialized agencies must be transformed to adapt to the tremendous democratic dynamism of the new international system. In order to give the United Nations the political power for real decision-making, the Security Council must genuinely represent the world as it is today.

Mr. Abdullah (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, allow me at the outset to convey to your Excellency our sincere congratulations and to express our pleasure on your election as President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that thanks to your well-known competence and diplomatic skills, our deliberations will reach a successful and meaningful conclusion.

Permit me also to take this opportunity to extend profound gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, for the exemplary manner in which he steered the work of the forty-seventh session.

At this point, I feel it is important to refer to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (A/48/1) issued in September 1993, which dealt with the activities of the United Nations and the issues and concerns on its agenda. In particular, I wish to refer to paragraphs 353 to 366 regarding the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

We highly commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his great efforts, and we shall be looking forward to contributing, with all Member States, in achieving a unified stand that will ultimately lead to an integrated approach of coordination, understanding and cooperation towards the advancement of our goals of development, peace and stability.

This session is convened at a time when the hopes and expectations of all peoples are geared towards a new phase of constructive international cooperation between the Members of the United Nations, whose number has been increasing annually. In this context, our country welcomes the admission of Eritrea to the membership of the United Nations after its accession to independence through its people's decades-long struggle. Eritrea is a country with which we have cultural and historical ties and with which we share aspirations after stability and peace. My country also welcomes the admission of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic as Members of the international organization and commends them for having settled their political problems peacefully and avoided conflicts, bloodshed and suffering. We also welcome the admission of the Republic of Macedonia, Andorra and Monaco to our Organization. We are confident that the enlargement of our international family will give us more strength and confidence in undertaking further innovative international cooperation.

These countries joined the United Nations after they had gained their independence through the long and painful struggle of their peoples during the cold war and the period that was overshadowed by conflict between the great Powers. Today, in the post-cold-war world, we see positive political developments taking place. In addition to the emergence of several sovereign nations, we have seen great political developments which give us renewed hope that a new world will be established on the basis of brotherhood and cooperation instead of conflict and bloodshed, a world in which wounds are healed.

Our presence here underscores our conviction that the General Assembly is the unique international forum for discussing and exchanging views among all Member States, regardless of their size or strength. As Members of the United Nations, we must engage in positive talks and negotiations with the purpose of settling international problems.

This forty-eighth session of the General Assembly is held under circumstances that should encourage us to establish a set of advanced rules that would govern international relations. This we should do by taking advantage of the newly acquired capability of the United Nations to enforce the rule of the law in peacemaking and peace-keeping the world over. We are confident that our Organization, which shoulders a heavy burden of serious responsibility will be able to rise to the challenges that face it, so long as the international community continues to be committed to and redoubles its efforts in supporting the United Nations and the principles it stands for.

There is no doubt that, the success of the United Nations depends on the coordinated efforts of Member States in addressing the outstanding issues and crises which must be solved collectively in the cause of building our new world order. There is an urgent need for the organs of the United Nations to provide positive conditions and effective mechanisms before the United Nations is required to deal with any regional or international crisis. We are convinced that no matter how far apart the positions of the parties to any conflict are, they will not reject intervention by the United Nations if the intervention is timely and appropriate. In any case, the tasks of the United Nations should be exclusively in the areas of achieving peace and providing humanitarian assistance.

The march towards peace between the two peoples of Palestine and Israel has just begun. The first important step has been taken towards the comprehensive solution for which we have long waited. The United Nations which, together with all its organs, played a prominent role in the Arab-Israeli conflict should feel a sense of satisfaction at what has been achieved. However, much work lies ahead for the United Nations and its organs in pursuing and preserving this historic agreement that will benefit not only the people of the Middle East, but the entire world as well. It is high time the Palestinian people put behind them their long-drawn-out suffering and looked forward to economic and social development under the new world order.

The Palestinian-Israeli agreement has paved the way towards other agreements between the Arabs and Israel. However, we should not be over-optimistic. The residues of bitter conflict are there, and unless the peoples and States of the Middle East are fully taken care of, those residues will constitute real obstacles which will make difficult the achievement of the goal we all aspire after.

The leaders of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples have shouldered their responsibilities and have done what was expected of them. Now it is the responsibility of all States of the world to maintain and preserve this achievement. It is not enough to extend congratulations to those leaders or to give them our moral support. The United Nations must take positive complementary steps towards sponsoring projects from which they could benefit economically and socially.

My country has voiced its support for this agreement between Israel and Palestine. We are very pleased to welcome this accord and look forward to a comprehensive peace agreement that would guarantee the mutual interests, rights and benefits of all parties on the basis of the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace.

Thus, we call upon all States Members of the United Nations to support this process. We look forward to any positive contribution to any role played by the United Nations in making the peace we hope for.

Regional cooperation in the area of economic and social development will always be an indispensable prerequisite of any new order in the Middle-East region. In order for the new dawn of peace which has just emerged with the signature of the historic agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel to continue, develop and become a reality, the international community has assisted in rehabilitating the countries that suffered from the war situation which, until recently, prevailed in the region. In this context, while we pay special attention to supporting the Palestinian people's progress to self-determination, we must also bear in mind the urgent need of the Lebanese people for assistance and help them rebuild their economic and social infrastructures. Whatever assistance the international community can offer by way of economic and administrative support will provide the foundation for hope in a future of peace.

The Middle-East region is not the only part of the world where optimism is diluted by fear. In many other parts of the world, the United Nations is deploying efforts that aim at tipping the scales in favour of optimism against anxiety and fear.

In this context, while we value the United Nations efforts in Somalia, we believe that such efforts should be based on concordance between the United Nations and the different Somali factions. The success of the United Nations operations in Somalia depends on the cooperation that can be achieved between the United Nations and the Somali factions. The restoration of peace and stability cannot be achieved unless all Somali factions commit

themselves to cooperate effectively with the United Nations in addressing the problems and difficulties that face the Somali people.

On the European continent, the international community continues to witness another serious and highly sensitive problem, namely the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is no doubt that it is the European countries that bear the responsibility of addressing the humanitarian, political, security and economic aspects of this problem.

The principles of human rights, justice and equality have always been the lofty ideals that civilized Europe preached and called upon the world to adhere to. Paradoxically, the world has yet to see those lofty principles being put into practice and translated into measures that would rescue the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina from their agony and from injustice and persecution. Although Europe is making efforts to steer the warring factions towards reconciliation, the fact that Europe has failed to take a decisive stand on the basis of justice and equality has made the continuing tragedy of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina doubly dangerous as its persistence may very well encourage the forces of evil and oppression in other parts of the world to take heart and follow in the footsteps of the aggressors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a matter of fact, we are beginning to witness examples of such behaviour, in the strife between Azerbaijan and Armenia, in the continuing plight of Georgia, in the explosive situation in Tajikistan, and in the continuing civil war in Angola and in many other war-stricken areas, hotbeds of tension which may explode at any moment and threaten world peace and security.

Some of those problems, as well as many others, are left-overs from the cold war conflicts. They persist in various forms and put a heavy burden on the United Nations and its organs. As I said earlier, this international Organization, with its present capabilities, cannot shoulder its responsibilities as vigorously as it should if it is to achieve full success in restoring stability whenever one of those problems explodes. Therefore, we believe that the United Nations should concentrate on issues of a humanitarian nature which attract a measure of regional and international consensus that would support United Nations action. It must be realized that if the United Nations goes on taking it upon itself to address the world's problems all in one go, it will squander its capabilities and will risk failure. It is therefore most important to establish a mechanism that would coordinate the efforts of the United Nations and the regional organizations in addressing such problems and crises.

We, as members of this international Organization, are enthusiastic and eager to develop the current mechanisms of the United Nations so that the Organization may be able to continue to play an essential and dynamic role in the world of tomorrow that should be built on the principles of dialogue and cooperation between countries and regional economic groups. Economic development and scientific progress will be principal features of that future world. Hence the pressing need for re-examining the economic structures of the various regimes that existed during the cold war era. Such re-examination should be guided primarily by the principles of free-market mechanisms and oriented towards freeing the potential of third-world countries to acquire advanced technology in order for those countries to be able to develop their resources and market their products without any economic barriers or restrictions. This, in our view, will help consolidate the world economic order and contribute to the world economic recovery from the recession that is currently wreaking havoc on the economies of the developed countries.

Cognizant of the growing interdependence and globalization of the world economy, the Sultanate of Oman contributes vigorously in this direction. For instance, in cooperation with large international institutions, the Sultanate of Oman has been involved in petrol resources development projects in Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation with the aim, *inter alia*, of assisting in the development and improvement of the economies of these countries which we believe could ultimately lead to greater general security and stability.

The Sultanate of Oman believes that the increasingly interdependent nature of the world economy is a major development in the post cold war era. We shall, therefore, work with our neighbours and partners to promote mutual economic prosperity. Our initiative towards building a strategic pipeline to transfer natural gas to the peninsula of the Indian subcontinent aims at fostering the economic growth of fraternal countries in that region. We call upon the world to take collective action towards alleviating poverty and hunger, which are the two main sources of regional tensions and political upheavals.

Allow me to take this opportunity to convey, on behalf of my Government, my sincere appreciation to the members of the Asian Group for their support and endorsement of the candidature of the Sultanate of Oman for membership in the Security Council during the period of 1994-1995. By the same token, my heartfelt gratitude goes to those countries and other groups which supported the candidature of my country. I should like to assure our

supporters and all Member States that from the very beginning of its membership, the Sultanate of Oman will do its utmost to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations, particularly in the area of establishing and maintaining peace.

With the desire for membership in the Security Council comes a strong awareness of the special responsibilities entrusted to the members of the Council. We commit ourselves to work collectively to achieve the effectiveness required for the implementation of the Security Council's resolutions and the success of the Secretary-General's efforts.

The Sultanate of Oman feels special responsibility towards its youth and their future, as they are the future generation that will work to maintain the new world order. For this reason, my country, based on its demographic profile, has given priority to the promotion of youth programs in its developmental, social and economic plans. We look forward to cooperating with other States through the United Nations in pursuing activities particularly aimed at the welfare of the youth of our communities.

In this context, I am delighted to highlight the September 1993 report of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) which describes the achievements of countries in the spheres of health and welfare of children. The report states that the Sultanate of Oman ranked first among Middle Eastern and North African countries and second world wide in the reduction of the child mortality rate for under fives. Moreover, the Sultanate of Oman occupied the first place among Middle Eastern and North African countries in the provision of vaccinations against measles. In the field of education, 91 per cent of our five-year-old children are attending elementary school, a statistic which exceeds regional and international averages.

We shall continue to improve on these achievements through the fruitful cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the organs of the United Nations, especially UNICEF, in the field of health programmes that would ensure children's welfare and development to our satisfaction. We view such efforts as good examples of how international cooperation can be seen to bring positive and beneficial results to our communities. We shall endeavour to achieve even better results in this area.

While we continue to focus on our youth, we also work simultaneously and enthusiastically to conserve the environment in order to ensure a healthy and better place for the next generation. In this regard, I should like to inform the General Assembly that my country has recently become part of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. This is in line with our conviction that the international agreements on the environment and our commitment to such agreements are the right way to protect this planet and its resources.

The environment, on which survival on this planet depends, is still beset by pollution and the exhaustion of essential resources. Such a situation undermines the prosperity of the inhabitants of the planet. Without operational and effective economic plans for the implementation of, and the relevant special procedures for, the environment conservation programme, the prospects of success for our efforts will be meagre indeed.

As in other areas, the differing levels of economic development from one country to the other lie behind environmental problems. We believe that the prevailing chronic recession in the world has not made it feasible to re-examine and redefine our economic priorities. However, there is a pressing and urgent need for such re-examination to be carried out against the backdrop of the environmental and economic challenges now facing us.

The recession that now plagues the industrialized countries has resulted from the deterioration of growth rates in the Third World countries. We hope that the developed countries will realize the importance of allowing the developing countries to revitalize their economies so that the economic order may regain the balance between the supply side upon which the economies of the industrialized countries depend and the demand side which constitutes the basis of the economic growth of the Third World countries.

We are concerned that if the developed countries are not fully responsive to and supportive of the essential requirements of economic recovery in the Third World countries, the present world economic situation will ultimately lead to a cancerous recession that will affect the whole world and lead to disastrously negative consequences.

Finally, it must be said that despite all this, we should tip the scales in favour of optimism regarding the prospects of building a new world of peace, brotherhood and prosperity. Regardless of the many hotbeds of regional and ethnic conflicts, we are confident that our constructive discussions at this session and at all levels will ensure the emergence of a better world in the coming century that will be free of all the tragic negative residues of the past. Our best guarantee that it will be so is that our common

future will depend on positive cooperation between all countries in the interests of international stability and prosperity under the rule of law and in consonance with the behests of justice and sagacity.

Mr. NIEHAUS QUESADA (Costa Rica) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It has been four years since the end of the cold war and the fall of the old ideological order. Four years ago we were told that war and global confrontation had ended and that history itself had come to an end, giving way to a new age. Today, yesterday's hopes and illusions are confronted by a reality with which we are all familiar. What is keeping us from turning our world into a fertile field and a common abode for all human beings?

These meetings are taking place at a time when a feeling of hope animates the hearts of men. The agreements signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have shown that peace is possible and that living in harmony does not require portentous events, but only awareness and willingness. We all know that these first agreements, if respected by both parties, can lead to a new dawn not only for Israel and Palestine but for all the countries of the Middle East - a new awakening of peace and prosperity in which this sublime teaching of the Koran can be made real:

> "Those who believe (in the Qur-an),
> And those who follow the Jewish (scriptures),
> And the Christians and the Sabians,-
> Any who believe in God
> And the Last Day,
> And work righteousness,
> Shall have their reward
> With their Lord: on them
> Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."(*Surah II, 62*)

But while Israelis and Palestinians are shaking hands and demonstrating their good judgement, the tragedy of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to fill the world with shame. A Member State of the United Nations which is not expressing ethnic or religious intolerance is trying to survive the bloodiest harassment witnessed by Europe since 1945 - nations respond with passivity and indifference. It is shameful that an international community rejoicing at the end of the cold war has not been able to take more decisive and effective action in respect to the inhuman aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Decade after decade, the echoes of that cold war were heard in this Hall. The East-West confrontation was viewed as the supreme obstacle facing the countries of the world in attempting to respond to their peoples's common yearning for liberty, justice and development. The ideological division, we were told, hampered the efforts made to ensure that all humanity benefited from development.

Today we no longer talk about the cold war, nor about ideological conflict, nor about the balance of terror. Nevertheless, the reality of what happened during those years continues to brand us. Some walls have come down but still others have been built. The peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America remain forgotten, marginalized, second-class human beings. The technological gap has become an abyss. Material progress is increasingly remote from our countries, and cooperation is decreasing before our very eyes. The North-South dialogue has once again been reduced to an implacable monologue or, in the best of cases, a rhetorical exercise to which justice and equity are rarely invited. And when we speak of new initiatives for cooperation, such as those recently announced for the people of Palestine, thought is given not to a global increase in aid but, rather, to cutbacks in other programmes. As an old and graphic Spanish proverb puts it: "You undress one saint so that you can dress another ".

What does the new peace mean for the countries of the third world? The assurance that their children will not be killed by bullets, but will continue to die of hunger or endemic diseases? The certainty that they will no longer have to go to war, but will continue without schooling, without a dignified life, decent jobs or proper medical care?

Sometimes ironic statements are made about the optimism of the diplomacy of the 1920s, with its agreements to renounce war and its naive faith in the capacity of the League of Nations to resolve every difficulty. We all know what happened in the end to optimism and that League, but it seems that we have not really learned the lesson. If the international community of the 1990s does not translate the end of the cold war into a true effort to build one world, in which there are no first- or second-rate countries, we shall very soon experience realities more tragic than those we have already known.

My country was overjoyed at the General Assembly's decision to choose you, Sir, to preside over the forty-eighth session. You have the most sincere congratulations of Costa Rica, a country that, like Guyana, forms part of the great Caribbean brotherhood. We are certain that, under

your guidance, the General Assembly will be able to fulfil mankind's hopes for peace and development.

We should like to express our sympathy to the Government and people of India at this time of grief for them.

The present situation is especially critical for the Central American and Caribbean States, which, because of their territorial dimensions, demographic situations and weak economies, are of little significance to the developed world. When the small, peripheral nations like ours try to unite our efforts, we are immediately faced with the locked doors of the international financial organizations, the large economic blocs and the transnational corporations, which even try to create apprehension and confrontation among us.

We are not asking for handouts. Begging is not part of a realistic and wide-reaching international policy. What our countries need is greater understanding of our realities, greater openness for our products, and more sincere and effective support for our desire to live in peace and democracy. What developing nations need is a change in attitude originating from a sense of the inalienable identity of humankind, a change in that amazing effrontery shown by the developed world for our tragedies.

The case of Central America clearly demonstrates the direction in which this widespread indifference is taking us. It is taking us into a prolonged and difficult effort, in which the international community is providing wide support. The people of Central America left behind many years of bloody convulsions. They decided to embark with enthusiasm on a new life, cemented in peace, democracy and freedom. But that joyful Central America, reborn for its children, has seen how the doors close one after another. Those who were interested in a Central America full of bloodshed and trenches do not want to deal with a Central America of the poor, the Central America that calls for cooperation for development, for understanding of its human and economic tragedies.

Figures can be deceiving. For example, it is said that Nicaragua receives $500 million in foreign aid. That sounds very good. What is not stated is that $450 million of the $500 million goes back to where it came from to service the external debt. In the meantime in that sister country even more disturbing outbreaks of violence flourish, reflecting its distressing situation. Recently an attempted *coup d'état* in Guatemala failed, but that failure did not translate into greater external support for the consolidation of Guatemalan democracy in the sectors most needed.

We do not know in which Central American country the next crisis will come, but it will not be long before it happens. It is regrettable that those who said so much about democracy and freedom and about peace and development in Central America are no longer being heard from. Today my delegation asks where is that support. What of the promises, the golden offerings, the abundant talk of a few years ago?

For example, let us take the case of banana production. Throughout the bloody crisis in Central America the European Community time and time again expressed its support for a peaceful and negotiated solution. It effusively supported the initiatives to transform Central America into a land of freedom and democracy, to keep our countries away from the strategic interests of the large hegemonistic blocs. Now that results have been achieved, the same Europe is placing strong barriers to the entry of Central American bananas to its markets, without stopping to think about the thousands of humble families that depend on this activity. Other Latin American democracies are facing the same attitude. As if that was not enough they are trying to provoke a conflict between the banana-growing countries of the Caribbean and those of Latin America, as if, following the custom of colonial times and invoking a non-existent antagonism between brothers, promoting divisions to hide the barriers that in other cases they themselves denounce as unjust.

Costa Rica believes that the time has come for frank, open dialogue that will permit a fair and adequate solution to this serious problem. For this reason we invite the member countries of the European Community and the producer countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, without exception, to enter into political talks which, together with the talks already under way at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), will facilitate a *rapprochement* between the positions of the only two parties to the problem, namely the producer and consumer countries. These contacts should have as a basis the recognition of the rights of the Latin American countries to sell their fruit in the Common Market and the reaffirmation of preferential treatment given to the Caribbean countries in the context of the Lomé Conventions.

While democracy endeavours to put down roots in Central America, markets for Central American products are being restricted by developed countries, cooperation programmes are being decreased or canceled, and attitudes

of inexplicable severity are being adopted in commercial and financial negotiations, and even in diplomatic relations. The Central America of peace and freedom is being dealt with in a way that the Central America of violence was never treated.

My country, which for many decades has not suffered from the Calvary of dictatorship and civil war, which has maintained intact its tradition of effective respect for human rights, has also had to face the same attitudes of indifference and lack of awareness. In this matter we draw attention to the disturbing decision of the United States Government to admit an administrative action brought before it against Costa Rica in which it is argued that the Costa Rican workers are not being guaranteed internationally recognized rights. This claim ignores our labour legislation which deals with rights and guarantees for workers and has gone further in more than 50 years than those of many developed countries, including the United States. The threat of excluding Costa Rica from commercial preference systems is not only a clear interference in its internal jurisdiction but also ignores the basic principles governing coexistence among nations, and, more specifically, respect for sovereign rights, and that attitude is at variance with traditional democratic principles and values which have always existed between both peoples and Governments.

The task of consolidating the achievements of the Central American peace process is everyone's responsibility. In the first place, as a new political commitment, the securing of peace and democracy and making human development a priority require a true national consensus sustained by a broad and participatory commitment, one that involves Governments and the organized sectors of civil society.

Secondly, a renewed and creative attitude on the part of Central American Governments is needed, an attitude that will rework and update the regional political agreements and, from a new point of view, will direct regional efforts towards creating a new Central America. We want a Central America where peace, freedom, democracy and development will prevail and this requires national and regional consensus on fundamental subjects such as enforcing the rule of law, strengthening democratic institutions, developing a democratic political culture, promoting and enforcing human rights, economic and political decentralization, decision-making at the local level, the modernization of production, guaranteeing equality of opportunity, widening the possibilities for economic participation, social development, and, finally, preserving our heritage for the society of the future.

Thirdly, the collaboration and commitment of Central Americans in the creation of this new Central America is necessary, but at the same time the participation of the international community is indispensable in order to fulfil the commitments made by the region in its transition to peace, freedom, democracy and development. In this perspective Costa Rica urges the General Assembly to decide in due course to offer its political and material support to this new challenge that is Central America at the end of this century.

In the present state of affairs the role of international and regional organizations as promoters and guarantors of peace and supporters of harmony and cooperation among the nations of the world is particularly decisive. For many long years lamentations were heard about the problems created for the United Nations by ideological conflicts which hindered the Organization and made it impossible for it to act dynamically and effectively. We have left such sombre hours behind and without doubt there have been important signs that this and other international organizations can and must provide many valuable and decisive contributions to the international community as a whole. Precisely for this reason we find ourselves at a key moment and we must now redefine and transform the United Nations and the regional organizations and make them vital mechanisms so that a life of peace, freedom and development will illuminate all the countries of the world.

A little more than a year ago the Secretary-General presented us with a series of important ideas regarding the restructuring of the United Nations. My country has expressed support for these wise proposals but at the same time we consider that the present circumstances are especially important and that this is an opportunity to meditate profoundly on the appropriateness of emphasizing more the role that international organizations should play as builders of a world of peace and development for all peoples.

My country considers that the United Nations cannot continue to ignore the question of the Republic of China in Taiwan. The existence of that exemplary country and the future of its 21 million inhabitants demand a revision of its relations with the United Nations. We firmly support the establishment of an ad hoc committee to study and find satisfactory solution to that problem in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law.

For many years we have urged that the two important instruments of the United Nations system be created and start functioning. These two instruments - so indispensable to the attainment of that system's aims of peace and

defence of fundamental human rights - are the University for Peace and the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights. We ask for support for both institutions, which are true pillars for the realization of the principles of the Charter.

My delegation applauds the efforts made by the United Nations in situations like those that exist in Haiti and Somalia. The defence of international peace and security continues to be a basic responsibility. We therefore support all efforts accepted in the cause of disarmament and arms control, and we view with special concern the case of countries that, like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, object to controls that are directed towards ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear arms. At the same time, however, Costa Rica considers it of fundamental importance that States Members of the United Nations not lose sight of the Organization's role in the task of making peace productive - a "sublime task", to borrow the term used by Amilcar Cabral to define the progressive advancement of mankind towards dignity and infinite growth.

The world is one. Our shared concerns for peace and the deterioration of the environment are an ample demonstration of this. Why not also acknowledge that mankind is one and that all who form part of mankind have a right to development and freedom?

The commitments undertaken last year in Rio de Janeiro at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to join in the search for sustainable development, in all its economic and environmental as well as its political, social and cultural dimensions, constitute a fundamental requirement if we are to achieve true peace and a dignified life for all the peoples of today's and tomorrow's world. The convening of the Conference and the agreements reached there, notwithstanding their limitations, are major achievements for the Organization. In this connection, the fact that many countries, including my own, have engaged in activities to carry out the commitments entered into there is of great importance. We also welcome the actions taken by the United Nations at the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Conference on Women, and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, aimed at broadening discussions about the hoped-for development. But if those efforts are to be successful, it is indispensable that the promises made by the industrialized countries at the Rio Summit be fulfilled - that is, that they provide new and additional financial aid, something they have so far done on a fairly meagre scale.

For nearly half a century, we have been living amid division, struggles about ideologies, worries over hegemonies. To a large extent, those sterile years are now behind us, but so much remains to be done. We are still confronted by hatreds of all kinds, by a polluted world, by natural disasters, by illiteracy and by peoples suffering from hunger and disease. However, if the international system managed to avoid allowing the cold war to lead to military catastrophe, surely it can find solutions to these other catastrophes that are afflicting mankind. If we do not want the military and ideological alliances of past years to re-emerge, we must replace them as soon as possible with a solidarity that is not founded on economic interests. My delegation firmly believes that the Organization can and must effect, as a priority, the qualitative transformation required by the international community - that is, the creation of a great family, without East or West, North or South. Brothers and sisters know nothing of the points of the compass.

In his book entitled *Things Fall Apart* Chinua Achebe tells of a community in Nigeria where the harvest was poor. Attempting to encourage a young man, his father tells him: "Do not be disheartened. I know you will not be disheartened. You have a brave and dignified heart. A dignified heart can survive a serious problem because the problem does not impinge upon his dignity. But it is more difficult and more bitter when you face it alone."

Hope resides in solidarity and in union. Mankind is one. All the peoples of the world must understand that we share the same future, that there are no longer problems that affect only others or differing destinies for mankind.

Working together with goodwill and in one spirit, we will be able to transform our world into a common home, into a fertile ground for the promotion of and respect for the dignity of all human beings, joined to face a common future of peace, justice and freedom.

Mr. HURST (Antigua and Barbuda): In 1965 three of the Caribbean's most outstanding statesmen created an institution to foster cooperation and to quicken the pace of their countries' development. Errol Barrow of Barbados, Forbes Burnham of Guyana and V.C. Bird of Antigua and Barbuda met at Dickenson Bay, Antigua. There, they signed a historic document creating the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA).

Although the three countries they led were not yet sovereign States, those enlightened statesmen envisioned the emergence of an independent, English-speaking Caribbean capable of playing a meaningful role in

international affairs. The entire Caribbean, beginning in 1492 and continuing throughout its modern history, had been an object of international intrigue and international competition. How fitting, then, for that region to help shape world history once it had taken hold of its own ambitions and aspirations.

In 1973, CARIFTA was transformed into a more extensive institution called the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Today, exactly 20 years after its establishment, all citizens of the 13 countries of CARICOM, whether living in the Caribbean or in the diaspora, celebrate this historic moment when a most able son of Guyana is elected to preside over the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Your brilliant academic career, your outstanding diplomatic skills and your warm, personable style of leadership assured your unanimous election. Antiguans and Barbudans rejoice with you and your country, and my delegation pledges its fullest support and cooperation.

My delegation is appreciative of the role played by the non-English-speaking countries that are members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States, whose full support was necessary to achieve this noble objective. The 33 States of the region have quietly made tremendous progress, in this and other forums, in strengthening the bonds of cooperation and friendship that bind us. And though we are divided on a single but important trade issue, we expect that an amicable solution will shortly be found to the satisfaction of both sides.

During the past year, our regional group of States worked together to find a solution to the Haitian crisis. The delegations of Brazil and Venezuela, regional members of the Security Council, made every attempt to include the entire region in the Council's decision-making process as it pertained to Haiti, another regional member. The United States must also be congratulated in that regard.

The peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean now eagerly await the return of President Aristide to Haiti on 30 October three weeks from today, when history will reverse itself. Despite the violence and the dilatory tactics employed by the military leaders in Haiti, Antigua and Barbuda is confident that the forces of good will, decency and democracy will prevail.

I wish to point out that no previous Security Council embargo intended to compel compliance with the will of the international community was ever as swiftly effective as was the embargo imposed on the illegitimate regime in Haiti. My delegation regards this episode as a turning-point in the history of Security Council actions to safeguard international peace and security.

Threats to international peace and security, up until the Security Council action on Haiti, have been narrowly defined as the use of force by one sovereign State against another, or some form of violent confrontation between or among States. A small State like mine, incapable of waging war and no longer an object of conquest, defines international peace and security more broadly.

Grinding poverty and the resultant ecological disaster which characterize Haiti are threats to the peace and security of that sovereign State and its neighbours. Not force, not violent threats, but poverty and its attendant consequences threaten international peace and security. Antigua and Barbuda, a small island State and an ally of democracy and legitimacy in the Americas and certainly in this forum, takes great pride in knowing that all of CARICOM pressed this cause here at the United Nations and elsewhere and that Haiti can count on us never to relent.

Antigua and Barbuda will never relent in its struggle against illegal drug trafficking, either. Located between the suppliers of the South and the markets of the North, we have been thrust by geography into the battle against this scourge. We pledge our slender resources in the global struggle against this global enemy.

Apartheid, another global enemy, is in its death throes. My small country takes pride in knowing that our voice has helped to topple that evil system in South Africa. From the moment of our independence 12 years ago, in 1981, my small country has supported the legitimate aspirations of oppressed peoples everywhere, but especially those of the majority population in South Africa.

In April of next year, when democratic elections are held to choose a representative government in South Africa, Antigua and Barbuda will also be able to celebrate a victory of right over wrong, of democratic ideals over dictatorship, of good over evil. The international community must begin preparing to come to the assistance of an anaemic South Africa whose need for economic good health in a post-apartheid world is even now apparent.

In April of next year, as apartheid suffers its final defeat, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will convene in Barbados. This Conference is the first test of

the will of the international community since the Earth Summit convened in Rio last June. You will recall, Mr. President, that the most significant conclusion of last year's Earth Summit was the determination that industrial civilization is fundamentally flawed.

Development based on the current model of consumption, distribution and disposal practised by the developed world is unsustainable. Abundant quantities of harmful gases and toxins, emitted into the atmosphere, are altering our global environment, and fatal consequences have been forecast for the Earth's climate, its biodiverse flora and fauna, its agriculture, all living animals and human health and well-being.

It should be borne in mind that while the contribution by small island States to climate change, global warming and sea-level rise is zero, the effects of climate change, global warming and sea-level rise will reduce small island States like mine to zero. Our very existence is at stake; our peace and security are threatened by the actions of large and wealthy States whose presumptions about the Earth's resources need to be completely revised.

The Barbados Conference will articulate a programme of action intended to eliminate these man-induced, looming catastrophes and to achieve sustainable development beginning in small island States. The international community's support and good will are required if sustainable development is to be made real and disaster is to be prevented.

Small island States are the foot-soldiers in this battle to save the planet. We will be the first casualties but we will not be the last if drastic changes are not quickly brought about in the developed world.

On Earth's last uninhabited continent, disaster can also be avoided. Antarctica, a pristine and icy wilderness whose waters abound with the most significant link in the oceans' food chain, whose winds control the earth's weather systems, whose tundras conceal the secrets of the Earth's past, and whose icebergs determine sea-levels world wide, must never become the possession of large States alone. Antigua and Barbuda will never acknowledge sovereignty over Antarctica by any State.

In fact, working alongside like-minded delegations, we will continue to press for a mining and oil exploration ban in perpetuity, certain that any other arrangement will lead to a precipitation of ecological decline worldwide, to the detriment of small island States among others. In our view, Antarctica must be declared a world park, control over which should be exercised by our world body.

The world's many peoples must learn to live in harmony with the Earth's environment and peaceably among ourselves. Ethnic strife and wars have taken more lives in the last year than comprise the entire population of my country and several other CARICOM States combined. All multiracial and multi-ethnic societies must learn to settle historic and current rivalries peacefully; when they fail to do so, resources which could well be spent on development are necessarily diverted to peace-keeping.

The peace-keeping missions now undertaken by the United Nations cost more than $3.5 billion annually; as a consequence, development assistance is severely restricted. Peaceful States like mine therefore have an economic interest in seeing a decline in the need for peace-keeping. Sadly, it is anticipated that more civil strife and many more ethnic and religious conflicts will occur in the near future and that the United Nations will be called on to help.

My delegation therefore applauds Liechtenstein for the role it has decided to play in this forum. That small European State is attempting to find a structured solution to the unyielding demand by rival groups within States for a measure of self-determination. The size of a country bears no relation to the intellectual capacity of its statesmen or to its capacity for generating great ideas. Antigua and Barbuda will work alongside this small State in promoting a permanent solution to destructive ethnic conflicts within States.

The world's indigenous peoples must also find permanent protection, and the injustices they have long endured must also quickly cease. Towards that end, our United Nations declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. It is not yet clear just how much impact the declaration has had; a fund has been established in the Americas to support the indigenous peoples of my region, and Brazil and Venezuela have shown courage in their support for the Yanomami, an Amazonian forest people.

Antigua and Barbuda also supports the establishment of an annual International Day of the World's Indigenous People. Having lost the indigenous Arawaks and Caribs of Antigua and Barbuda, beginning in 1492, my country is duty-bound to ensure that powerless indigenous people the world over, who have inhabited the lands of their ancestors for many generations, are adequately remembered and protected by our United Nations.

The people of Antigua and Barbuda condemn the perpetrators of the fierce conflict which continues to rage in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we deplore the attacks on United Nations peace-keepers in Somalia as much as we abhor the destructive campaign waged by mercenaries in Angola. The civil wars in Liberia and Mozambique are brutish and unyielding, and the civil strife which has erupted in Georgia will likely match both in ferocity and destructiveness.

In the Middle East, the slow trickle of peace has turned into a gushing stream with many tributaries. It is our hope that the Israelis and until the Palestinians will be able to find the source of a lasting flow of peace. Until Israel is allowed to exist within secure borders and until the Palestinians achieve a sovereign State of their own, peace in that region may slowly evaporate.

We rejoice at the wave of peace which has engulfed Lebanon. Its very industrious citizens, flung far and wide by a conflict that seemed unending, can now give back to their homeland some of the talent and wealth which their rich culture bestowed upon them. Lebanon can surely count on its prodigious sons and daughters in the diaspora for every assistance; their generosity is as legendary as their love for their old country.

We welcome the finalization of the demarcation of the boundary between Kuwait and Iraq which was accomplished by the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Commission in May 1993. We also welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 833 (1993) in which it guaranteed the inviolability of the boundary between the two States. This guarantee shall serve as a deterrent against future conflict between these two neighbours while enhancing stability and security in the region.

My people celebrate with the countries of the Central American region as peace rains down upon them. If future civil wars are to be prevented, however, the economic systems which prevail in Central America must become far more inclusive. In distributing wealth, methods must be found to direct more than a trickle towards the poor.

We note that the impoverishment of Cuba's people is due overwhelmingly to exogenous circumstances, and so our sympathies lie with the people of this sister Caribbean State. In the early decades of this century, Cubans welcomed poor workers from neighbouring Antigua to their shores. Today, standing in solidarity with the Cuban people, Antiguans and Barbudans seek a speedy end to their suffering.

I would be remiss in my duty, as I conclude, if I did not convey to the outgoing President, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, the gratitude of my delegation for the important role he played during the preceding session of the General Assembly. It was under his watch that six new Members joined our Organization. I welcome to membership the Czech Republic, the Republic of Slovakia, Eritrea, Monaco, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Andorra. Their presence greatly enhances our institution's legitimate claim of universality, as membership climbs to 184.

In that regard, my delegation would note that Antigua and Barbuda supports a manageable enlargement of the Security Council to reflect the new realities. However, our delegation will not join any consensus on enlargement if the qualifying criteria for new membership implicitly require a certain level of wealth and/or a certain population size. Although we harbour no ambitions to sit on the Security Council, my small country cannot agree to be excluded from the Council in perpetuity. Such exclusion would make us less sovereign than larger States.

The moral conscience of our institution can best be articulated frequently by small States with no material interest in the outcome of disputes. But even more important is the fact that our own survival requires us to contribute to the construction of a new world order that will have its basis in Security Council decision-making. We wish merely to retain our option, for we know not what future generations will encounter.

My delegation concludes by recalling that on 31 March 1918 - 75 years ago - another generation of Antiguans and Barbudans challenged an unconscionable system of exploitation that left us materially impoverished. Our grandmothers and grandfathers, then youthful and vigorous, were determined to fashion for themselves and their progeny a future that would be superior to their own inheritance. In 1918, brutality was the response to their legitimate cry for workers' rights.

Twenty years later - in 1938 - a sympathetic Commission was to determine that the deplorable conditions then extant in my country required massive infusions of public finance and good will in order to achieve a marked turn-around. When, in 1943 - 50 years ago, and 25 years after the 1918 revolt - a nationalist named V. C. Bird picked up the mantle of leadership of the workers' organization, my small country began its metamorphosis in earnest.

Seventy-five years after March 1918, the Antigua and Barbuda that has evolved bears no resemblance to the Antigua and Barbuda that history left behind. When V. C. Bird and his trade-union colleagues quickened our stride towards freedom and an improved material condition, beginning in 1943, they had a vision of an Antigua and Barbuda which, 50 years later, has become virtual reality.

As V. C. Bird and his generation pass the mantle of leadership to their successor generation, our old men have visions, and our young women have dreams. Antiguans and Barbudans are aware that there are detractors abroad who may wish to see our freedom snatched from us. We have paid a price for our freedom, which we will for ever defend. And we are aware of the role played by the United Nations and international law in safeguarding the sovereignty of small States.

We shall therefore for ever remain wedded to multilateral institutions like the Caribbean Community, the Organization of East Caribbean States, the Organization of American States, the Commonwealth and this body - the United Nations - which, together, strengthen our sovereignty. Multilateralism is the greatest ally of our freedom, and the United Nations the greatest guarantor.

As Antiguans and Barbudans recall the courage of the heroes of 1918, we pledge never again - never again - to allow injustice and brute force to raise their ugly heads in our beautiful, beloved Antigua and Barbuda. My generation will continue to do all that is necessary to bequeath to future generations a peaceful legacy, where justice rules, ignorance is banished, and legitimate leadership springs from the people's choice. That is our pledge.

Mr. Bassia (Central African Republic) *(interpretation from French)*: The direction that international relations have taken today, although to some extent decided upon by States, reflects, none the less, the limited ability of States to bring the condition of the world into line with the new international social realities. If the problems that face the international community because of this international social dynamic are to be resolved they must be tackled through collective, concerted and appropriate action that goes beyond the national framework. My country is happy that there is among States a growing awareness of these needs. We welcome this new direction as the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly begins.

But before stating my delegation's views about how to encourage States to share this new approach - and as we work in this direction we shall be calling on you, Sir, to demonstrate your great qualities - we should like to extend to you the warm congratulations of the Central African Republic on your election as President of the General Assembly. We pledge to you our full cooperation, and express the hope that your work will be crowned with success.

The wisdom and spirit of compromise with which your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, conducted the proceedings at the last session earned the full appreciation of my delegation.

The renewed authority of our Organization is due, of course, to the determination of Member States but also to the conviction and methodical, rational and pragmatic action of the Secretary-General, who has always, and in all circumstances, endeavoured to work for the purposes and principles of the Organization. To
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali we pledge the renewed support of the Central African Republic.

My delegation also welcomes the admission to our Organization of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Eritrea, the Principality of Monaco, the Principality of Andorra and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Their admission fulfils the oft-expressed desire of the international community to see all the countries of the world as Members of our Organization and thus strengthen its universal character. All States, individually and collectively, must come together to defend the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It is unacceptable for some States still to be excluded.

For this reason, in the view of the delegation of the Central African Republic, today it is important that the place of the Republic of China in our Organization be reconsidered. The immense progress made by the Republic of China in Taiwan in the political, economic and social spheres has now earned it the right to resume its place here so that it can contribute, better than it did in the past, to the flourishing of international cooperation through its active participation in the United Nations system.

The developments in the international arena we are witnessing today arise from the process of transformation that the world has undergone, especially in the last few years. These transformations affect all areas of international life, and, fortunately, States are taking them into account as they manage their international relations, which, to a large extent, determine the direction our world takes. There is also an emerging tendency for problems to have world-wide effects, prompting States to become the

guardians of world interests. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated in cooperation and concerted action among States in the spirit suggested by our Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" in efforts to contribute to laying the foundation for real peace in the world. Indeed, notwithstanding certain reflexive and automatic responses the relics of the cold-war conditions, States today are increasingly determined to do what they can, on the foundation of the principles of the United Nations and in cooperation with the United Nations, in order, if not to eliminate, at least try, to reduce prevailing tensions in other areas of the world.

My delegation is happy that this approach has now made it possible for the situation to evolve as it has in Cambodia, South Africa - where the Central African Republic supports the appeal by the President of the African National Congress (ANC), Mr. Nelson Mandela, to lift sanctions against South Africa - and, finally, in the Middle East, in respect of which my country pays a hearty tribute to Mr. Yasser Arafat and Mr. Yitzhak Rabin for their courage, vision and lucidity in signing recently the historic accord on mutual recognition. This same desire for cooperation is needed in order to bring about a positive and speedy settlement of the problems of the former Yugoslavia, Western Sahara, Angola and Somalia.

The international gatherings recently held in Vienna and Geneva, while making it possible to take the measure of the sad reality of human-rights violations throughout the world, provided at the same time an opportunity for States to reaffirm the need for concerted international action with a view to guaranteeing more securely these values. In addition, since the Rio Conference, States have shown greater interest in the question of the environment, and they have now made Agenda 21 a real platform for cooperation in this area, which will make it easier to ensure better protection of the common heritage of mankind while maintaining conditions for sustainable development.

This tendency for problems to have world-wide effects, if systematically managed, would usher in a new era, that of the triumph of multilateralism, an era in which the United Nations would bring its authority to bear - as it is trying, with varying degrees of success, to do today in certain peace-keeping operations - in other areas of cooperation, such as cooperation for development. Inadequacies in the area of cooperation are in sharp contrast to the declared determination of States to contribute to maintaining balance in the world in the post-cold-war period. It is, then, desirable that real solidarity be cultivated among Member States, which might induce developed countries to support efforts for development in developing countries, in particular in Africa.

The economic condition of these countries is constantly deteriorating from year to year, and they have often come before this and other bodies to bring their problems to the attention of the international community, whose response has, unfortunately, not removed any of the obstacles to those countries' development. Those obstacles are, in short, the continuing decline of prices of commodities, the heavy debt burden and debt-servicing, negative net financial flows and strengthened protectionism. If these factors persist, there is no doubt that the African countries will have increasing difficulty in overcoming their situation. But these countries must not be excluded from development, and everything must be done to encourage their efforts at development.

The duty of solidarity calls for dialogue and cooperation between the developed countries and the developing countries in order to ensure fairer remuneration for commodities and an easing of the debt burden and debt-servicing. Coordinating efforts at the level of the United Nations system, among international economic and financial institutions and organizations and among non-governmental organizations is required to improve the situation of the developing countries.

Such activity would be in keeping with the new spirit that characterizes international relations today and that has made it possible for some developed countries to support the democratization process that has begun in some of our countries, including my own. I should like, in this regard, to express our deep gratitude to all the countries and institutions that have so kindly provided us with material and financial support and sent international observers to help the cause of democracy in the Central African Republic. We hope we shall continue to enjoy their concerned assistance in our endeavour to lay the foundation of our young democracy, and, from this rostrum, I wish to appeal for understanding.

My delegation believes that the time has come to bring about genuine democratization in the decision-making bodies of the United Nations, the Security Council in particular, the membership of which must be adapted to the new realities of the world.

The great developments in science and technology have today reduced our world to a global village where each and every one of us must feel directly affected by all the problems that exist on the various levels of international life. The trend towards the globalization of

problems that has become evident as a result of this ought to be maintained so that States can take up the challenge of defending peace by promoting the development of human rights.

For the Central African Republic, this challenge can be successfully taken up if we fully respect the principles of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.